

Electronic Cigarettes in King County

Electronic cigarettes are battery operated devices that deliver nicotine - the highly addictive substance in tobacco. On 12/16/10, the King County Board of Health passed an ordinance making it illegal to:

- sell e-cigarettes to minors
- offer free or discounted e-cigarettes
- use e-cigarettes in any area where smoking is prohibited by law

This county-wide ordinance, which went into effect on 1/15/11, will promote the public's health by preventing youth from nicotine addiction and preserving our public spaces as smoke-free.

What are electronic cigarettes?

- Battery-operated devices deliver nicotine vapor to mimic cigarette smoking
- Made of a cartridge filled with flavoring and various strengths of liquid nicotine
- Can cost as little as \$10, but a starter kit is typically available for \$50 to \$100
- Not regulated or approved for use in tobacco cessation by the FDA



Why did the Board of Health ban e-cigarette sales to youth?



- E-cigarettes may appeal to youth because of:
 - high-tech design
 - placement in mall kiosks, convenience stores and online
 - wide array of flavor cartridges, including fruit punch, chocolate and mint
- Use of e-cigarettes among youth can increase nicotine addiction and may lead to use of conventional tobacco products

Why aren't e-cigarettes a safe alternative to smoking?

- Testing by the FDA found products that:
 - Contained diethylene glycol, an ingredient used in antifreeze that is toxic to humans
 - Contained human carcinogens (half of the samples tested)
 - Misrepresented of nicotine level
 - Had poor product quality control
- Companies continue to claim that e-cigarettes are a safe and effective way to quit using tobacco, without FDA approval or product testing
- Most e-cigarettes don't have health warnings comparable to FDA-approved nicotine replacement products or conventional cigarettes

For more information, call 206-296-7613 or go to: www.kingcounty.gov/health/tobacco.

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